THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, sir.

(b) The reasons are *inter alia* delayed reports from the field formations of the Income-tax Department and requests for adjournment of cases fixed for hearing by the applicants as well as the Department.

(c) The Commission has taken following steps for settlement of cases:

(i) holding meetings with the concerned Chief Commissioner of Income-tax to expedite the Reports.

(ii) Camping by Benches of the Commission at different stations; and

(iii) Reallocating the work among the four Benches of the Commission to increase disposal.

Seeking Special Grant by Railways

1567. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have sought special grant from Government to accelerate work on select projects;

(b) if so, the projects proposed to be covered by the special grants; and

(c) the action taken to sanction additional funds to complete the pending projects in Public Interest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir;

(b) and (c) Additional budget support of Rs. 1898 crore for (i) replacement and renewal of over-aged assets of Railways as a part of their effort to strengthen Railway Safety (Rs. 1000 crore) and (ii) accelerated progress of select projects (Rs. 898 crore) has been agreed to. Ministry of Railways will accordingly obtain the approval of the Parliament through Supplementary Demands for Grants in the current session.

Subsidiaries of ICICI

1568. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of subsidiaries of ICICI at present;

(b) whether RBI has asked this Financial Institution to prove its subsidiary;

(c) if so, what is the proposed course of action?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) As per the publishsed balance sheet of ICICI, it has 31 subsidiaries as on 31st March, 2001. While giving the in principle approval to ICICI for entry into general insurance business, FI was advised by Reserve Bank of India to review their subsidiary net work in order to further rationalise it. RBI had also advised them not to set up any further subsidiary.

PAN based excise registration

1569. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of persons having excise registration as on the last day of the financial year 1999, 2000 & 2001;

(b) what is the number of those who have taken the PAN based excise registration number introduced in November, 1999;

(c) whether Government have any plan of making this PAN based registration compulsory and if so since when; and

(d) whether increase in revenue collection is one of the objectives of introducing this PAN based excise registration number?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The total number of persons having excise registeration as on the last day of financial year is:

1999	:	1,16,577
2000	:	1,17,499
2001	:	1,18,814

(b) Nil, since PAN based excise registration number has been introduced with effect from 1.11.2001 and not in November, 1999.

(c) Yes, Sir. With effect from 1.11.2001 for fresh registrants and from 1.12.2001 for existing registrants except from small scale Matches and Biri manufacturers who have been exempted for the time being.